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1909

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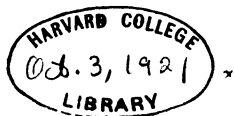
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Introduction

In the following few pages I have tried to show the Bridge player what he must know in order to play Auction. Realizing the painful fact that there are many who wish to learn, and few students, I have outlined in this brief manual a system of play which has been tested and found satisfactory.

CHARLES STUART STREET.

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The Rules of Auction

In addition to the generally known rules of Bridge the following rules govern the play of Auction :

1. The value of the tricks is the same as in Bridge, but no one can ever score towards the game except the declarant, and he only when he fulfills his contract. The opponents can never score except in the honor column.

2. The winners of the rubber add 250 points in the honor column.

3. The dealer must declare to win at least the odd trick in a trump suit or at No-trumps: he cannot pass the bid.

4. After the original declaration, each player in turn has the right to pass, to double or

redouble, or to make a higher bid than the previous one. Thus, one odd in Clubs outranks one in Spades, and one in No-trumps is higher than one in Hearts. Also, the player who undertakes to win two odd in Diamonds is making a higher bid than the one who ventures one in Hearts, because the two in Diamonds equal 12 as against 8 for the one trick in Hearts. So also a bid of two in Diamonds outranks one in No-trumps because, while each bid equals 12, the one who declares to take the greater number of tricks is considered the higher bidder.

5. A player always may bid higher than the previous bid, even if it is his partner's, but cannot raise his own bid after the other three players have passed.

6. The final declarant (whether doubled or not) plays the dummy except that when a player has raised his partner's bid in the same suit, the original declarant of that suit is the one who plays the dummy.

7. When he fulfills his contract, the de-

clarant scores towards the game all the tricks he wins, whether exactly the number he undertakes to make, or more.

8. When the declarant fails to fulfill his contract neither side can score anything towards the game but the adversaries score 50 points in the honor column for each trick that the declarant misses ; this penalty is increased to 100 points for each trick if the declarant has been doubled, and 200 if either he or his partner has redoubled.

9. On a declaration of one spade, whether doubled or not, the declarant's loss is limited to 100 points, regardless of the number of tricks the adversaries take.

10. If a player declares out of turn, the player on his left may let the declaration stand, whereupon the bidding continues ; or he may demand a new deal.

11. If a player in his declaration fails to call a sufficient number of tricks to outbid the previous call, he is forced to increase his bid

to the proper number and his partner is debarred from any further declaration unless the adversaries make some other bid, or double.

12. A player is always entitled during the play of the hand to know what was the value of the final declaration, but if any player informs his partner in regard to a previous call, the opponents may demand a new deal.

13. Doubling and redoubling affect the trick value in the score when the declarant fulfills his contract, but do not change the value of the tricks in bidding: one Heart still outbids a doubled Diamond.

14. A declaration can be doubled and redoubled, but that is all. A player cannot double his partner's call nor redouble when his partner has doubled. But when his partner's call has been doubled by the opponent, he can redouble.

15. A double is considered as a continuation of the bidding and allows further declara-

tions to be made. It is only after three players in succession have passed that the bidding is ended.

16. If a player whose declaration has been doubled fulfills his contract, he scores not only his doubled trick score but also 50 points in the honor column for fulfilling his contract and 50 points more for each trick over. If he or his partner has redoubled he scores in the same way 100 points instead of 50.

17. If a player doubles out of turn his left hand opponent may demand a new deal.

18. If either of the declarant's opponents leads out of turn, the declarant may consider the card led as an exposed card or may call a lead from either adversary when it is his turn to lead.

19. There is no penalty for a lead out of turn on the part of the declarant.

20. When the declarant revokes, the adversaries score 150 points in their honor column in addition to the penalty the declarant has

incurred if he has failed to fulfill his contract. Having revoked he can score nothing in the trick column but is entitled to honors or chicane.

21. When either adversary revokes the declarant may score 150 points in the honor column or take 3 tricks from them, which tricks may be counted by him towards fulfilling his contract but carry no bonus in the honor column if the declaration has been doubled.

The Value of the Declaration

There are five channels of profit in Auction, five things to play for.

1. To win any game but especially the rubber.

As the object of any game must be to win it, it is wise to declare and to play with that end in view and with the score constantly in mind.

2. To outbid the adversaries when short of the suit they are bidding in even if you cannot go game on your bid.

For example, should they bid two on Hearts when you are short in Hearts but have a very long and strong Club suit, you should bid four in Clubs, not with the idea of going far in Clubs but of preventing

them perhaps from winning the game. Here you are not playing so much to win yourself as to keep them from winning.

3. To score in the honor column by beating their make.

When holding good cards in their suit and having no great strength of your own, it is better not to play for merely a trick or two, but to try to beat them.

4. To score in the honor column by doubling the opponents' make.

Often, as when the score demands that they shall try to go out or prevent you from going out, you can outbid them and so drive them on to declare beyond their strength, when you can double and beat them. But unless they are out anyway on their declaration it is always dangerous to double and perhaps lose the game.

5. To prevent the adversaries from going out by outbidding their make even when expecting to lose.

Late in the rubber game it is wise to try to secure the play of the dummy hand. You will then keep the adversaries from going out although you may lose in the honor column.

The Original Declaration

As dealer you should declare as follows :

- 1 SPADE with a hand below the average, containing not more than three tricks, and with no future declaration ever to come out of it. This bid your partner *must not* molest unless he has a really strong hand.
- 1 CLUB with a long and strong suit of Clubs and but little else.
- 1 DIAMOND with either a long, strong suit of Diamonds and little else, or a badly balanced hand which is good if Diamonds are trumps, but is not of much assistance to a Heart make or a No-trump.

- repell*
1 HEART with a long, strong suit of Hearts and little else, or with a good Heart hand which may go game and is not suited to change to a No-trumper.
- 1 NO-TRUMP with any good No-trump hand holding three or two Aces. Any one-Ace No-trumper is dangerous and should not be declared unless the hand is otherwise very strong. Such a declaration of 1 No-trump is best when the hand must be either a No-trump or a black make. It is usually unwise where there is any choice between a No-trumper and a red make.
- 2 SPADES with a generally good hand containing four or more tricks, regardless entirely of what is held in Spades. Such a hand should be better than the average, could probably support any declaration from partner, and might itself become a red make or a No-trump according to your partner's declaration.

This is a most important and informative declaration, and unless the second player has made some bid your partner *must increase* your bid so as to give you another chance.

When you are the original declarant you must also bear in mind that in addition to the above you can always declare any suit when the state of the score is such that you think you can go out.

The Second Player's Declaration

When you are the second player you usually pass the bid, but you declare in the following cases :

1. When you have a hand worth trying for the game in.
2. When one spade has been declared and you have any good make. If you do not declare now you may never have another chance.
3. When you have a very long and strong suit without much else.
4. When you can double the first declaration, especially when 1 Spade has been declared and you have Ace and King of Spades, although short in the suit.

You, as second player, must be chary about declaring 1 No-trump when short of any suit like Clubs, Diamonds or Hearts declared originally, as that must be long, and lies strongly against you.

The Third Player's Declaration.

When your partner has bid 1 Spade you must not increase that bid unless holding a hand stronger than the average good hand, or one in which you think you will lose less than 100 points, as that is the maximum loss at 1 Spade whether doubled or not.

When your partner has bid 2 Spades you *must* make some higher bid unless second hand has declared, in which case you bid higher only when you have some really strong suit of your own.

You must remember that in making some higher bid to take your partner out of his 2 Spade make, it is better to show a short Ace-King suit, than a much longer suit headed by the Queen. The Ace-King suit means

two tricks probably at any declaration, but the Queen suit is of value only if it remains the trump. Holding a bad hand or a long Spade suit, you can bid 3 Spades which bid your partner can change to suit his hand.

With 2 Aces, or 1 Ace and two other suits protected, or 1 Ace and a strong suit, you can declare 1 No-trump at once.

Upon your partner's declaration of 1 No-trump if you have a long and strong red suit, without much else, it would probably be better to change to that.

The Fourth Player's Declaration

When you are the fourth player you have heard more evidence than anyone else before you come to your declaration, and your course of action is determined by what the others have done. After an initial 1 Spade bid if the others have passed you must choose to win on some declaration of your own or to try to beat the adversaries' make, perhaps even doubling it. But you must remember that doubling re-opens the bidding and allows the dealer or his partner to change to another suit. You yourself should not declare unless you have a really good make or some very strong suit. Also after an initial 1 Spade, if your partner has doubled, or declared some suit, you can credit him with taking cards and perhaps change to a No-trump. Again, after an initial 1 Spade bid if your partner has

passed and the third player has declared some suit, thereby showing a hand stronger than usual, you, as fourth player, must give due weight to that fact before launching a more expensive make. For it must be remembered that the initial 1 Spade does not necessarily mean a worthless hand; there may be three tricks in it or even an Ace and a King.

After an initial 2 Spade declaration if partner has passed and the third player has increased the bid, you, as fourth player, must have a hand stronger than the average to bid at all, as strength lies on both sides of you. But if the third player has bid 3 Spades you have a right to credit your partner with some strength in the red suits.

Continuation of the Bidding

When the bidding comes around again you, as the original declarant, unless the other three players have passed, have a right to make a second bid. After your initial 1 Spade bid has been raised by your partner, who in turn has been outbid by the adversaries, you should increase your partner's bid only when you can supply two tricks or are short of the suit the adversaries have declared.

When your initial bid was 2 Spades and your partner has lifted you out with some red make which suits your hand, you should let it stand, but if you have only one or none of that suit, it may be better to change to a No-trump. If you have three fair suits and he bids in the fourth, or if you are very strong in two suits and he bids on a third, it is probably a No-trump. If, however, your partner bids three spades, he is either long in Spades or has a poor hand. After such a bid by him unless the adversary has declared, you should

try to change your bid even to a doubtful No-trump. You must remember it is better to try for seven tricks in No-trumps than nine in Spades, as you are confronting a fixed loss of 50 points a trick for each trick you fail to get, whether it is Spades or No-trumps.

After the first round of the declaration each player must be keenly alert to collate, weigh, record and remember every item of information, no matter how slight, that can be gleaned from every previous player's action. Only with such absolute knowledge, together with an exact realization of the state of the score, can he decide whether to venture a higher bid, to double, or to pass.

Late in the rubber game it often pays to declare beyond the strength of your hand and secure the bid even if you lose in the honor column, as in that way the opponents cannot go out, and you have another chance for the rubber. But it is unwise to carry such play to extremes, as your loss may become so great that the winning of the rubber later will fail to reimburse you.

Doubling

In Auction, doubling simply means that you wager that the declarant will not fulfill his contract. If he undertakes to get 3 odd in Hearts and you double him, it does not mean that you expect to win the odd, as in Bridge. If he gets 2 odd you win your 100 in the honor column and he can score nothing. Therefore, upon a bid of 4 or 3 tricks from the adversary, you frequently can double, although very short in trumps, if you have enough outside tricks to count.

Suggestions for Doubling

You can double an original 1 Spade bid if you hold Ace and King of Spades and want to encourage your partner to make it No-trumps.

Do not be in a hurry to double any other 1 trick made. It alarms the opponents and allows them to change to another suit. If you wait and double a 2 trick or 3 trick declaration, any change they may make is likely to prove equally expensive.

Do not double when your double, if it loses, will help the adversaries to win the game. For example, to double a 1 Heart make when the opponents are 16 is bad, but you can double a 2 Heart make if your hand warrants it, as they are out anyway, if they win, without your double.

Remember that doubling never can help your trick score, but can help that of the adversaries. You can win only in the honor column but they can go out.

The Opening Lead

In No Trumps.

If your partner has declared in some suit and you have no good lead of your own you should lead his suit to him, usually the top of it.

Avoid leading any suit the adversaries have declared in unless you are strong in it.

If your partner has doubled a No-trump, having previously declared in some suit, lead him your best card of that suit, not a Heart. If he has shown no suit, lead him a Heart, unless the adversaries have declared in Hearts.

In Declared Trump.

As in Bridge any suit headed by two cards in sequence is usually a good lead ; so also is a short suit when not holding four trumps.

It is better to hold Aces in reserve.

Avoid leading any suit the adversaries have declared in unless you are short in it or are leading through strength on your left.

The best way to help your partner when he has doubled a declared trump make is by leading an Ace-King suit or a singleton. He rarely wants a trump lead from you.

Discard

Discard as in Bridge, a low card meaning usually that you do not want the suit, and a card higher than the 6 that you may, and probably do want it.

A high discard early in the hand usually means that you are strong in that suit and either wish to show it at once or have to discard that way to protect other cards. Late in the hand a high discard simply means protection to aid your partner in his discard.

Final Hints

Always use the same expressions in your bidding. Merely say "1 No-trump," or "2 Hearts," "I double" or "I pass." Avoid any form which would imply doubt or hesitation, such as "I think I'll double."

In all bidding remember that Aces and Kings are the cards of permanent value in the shifting scene of the makes. You have a right to count on your partner for at least one good card in any suit that he bids on.

Remember the importance of fulfilling your contract. When you can do that, don't finesse or try for one trick more unless an extra trick is needed for the game.

In all declaring and doubling consider carefully from which hand the lead will come. This often makes an enormous difference in the hand.

Realize that Auction is not Poker and that bluffing in your declaration is likely to prove a boomerang. Any false step on your part may lure your partner to hazard a fatal move.

Be conservative at first until you have settled in your mind the values of the different declarations.

Don't become excited and play an emotional game. The player who is sanguine, reckless, obstinate, or careless will be a sure loser at Auction.

Remember that the state of the score is the compass by which you steer your game. Watch it every instant: it should guide you in each move that you make.

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